

## Ben Cook

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**From:** Malika Abdul-Basir  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 24, 2012 9:08 AM  
**To:** Ben Cook  
**Subject:** FW: Support Message / Comments for SmartZone Extension Bill 5246

Please add to Commerce Committee for HB 5246

**From:** Cornelius Sheridan [<mailto:nsherida@kettering.edu>]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 22, 2012 5:05 PM  
**To:** Malika Abdul-Basir; Rep. Wayne Schmidt (District 104)  
**Subject:** Support Message / Comments for SmartZone Extension Bill 5246

Dear Chairman Schmidt and Members of the House Commerce Committee,

Thank you very much for your leadership and interest regarding the much-needed inclusion of Traverse City and Flint into Michigan's SmartZone network.

Over the last two years, many partners have collaborated to organize a SmartZone application for the greater Flint region. We are delighted that the opportunity has arrived to act on it.

Flint has had a de facto SmartZone for at least the last 4 years. Our universities, businesses, governments, non-profits and entrepreneurs have helped create a entrepreneurial eco-system in our region that now has over 45 tech start-up companies, another 100 earlier stage "concept teams", and more than 60 experts ready to assist on technology issues or business growth matters. We also are home to first-class facilities designed to help these companies, such as the wet-lab incubators at Kettering's \$4 million Innovation Center and Mott Community College's "FabLab", an MIT-affiliated fabrication center for advanced prototyping. Industry specific innovation groups have formed to foster business development in sectors such as biomedical and alternative energy innovations.

By enabling Flint to become a SmartZone, the Legislature and Administration will put our many entrepreneurs on a more equal footing for investment funding, grants, and access to the state's other excellent public and private resources.

Without dispute, the designation as a Michigan SmartZone will also help Flint be better recognized for our current tech company successes and for our expanding role in Michigan's Innovation Economy.

We would like to repeat an earlier offer to assist Traverse City (and the possible 3rd city) with developing a strategy and plan for a SmartZone. We made through the offer through the MEDC and SBTDC to your local technology entrepreneurship support organizations. Please let us know how you would like to proceed.

Our regional tech entrepreneurs are seeking to create employment and prosperity. We urge you to support the expansion of the SmartZones program to include Flint and its surrounding area.

Thank you again for making this next important step possible for our cities.

Sincerely,

Neil Sheridan  
Director, Kettering University TechWorks  
Chairman, M.I.T. Enterprise Forum of the Great Lakes

C: 248-840-3402  
neil.sheridan@kettering.edu